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General and complete disarmament: countering the threat posed by improvised explosive devices

Afghanistan, Australia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Spain and Sweden: draft resolution

Countering the threat posed by improvised explosive devices

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 70/46 of 7 December 2015, 71/72 of 5 December 2016 and 72/36 of 4 December 2017,

Expressing grave concern over the devastation caused by the increasing use of improvised explosive devices by illegal armed groups, terrorists and other unauthorized recipients,[1] which has affected a large number of countries and has resulted in thousands of casualties, both civilian and military, and, in this regard, stressing the need for all actors to comply with applicable international law at all times,

Expressing concern over the increased use of and sophistication of the design and means of detonation of improvised explosive devices,

Expressing profound concern at the indiscriminate use and effects of improvised explosive devices and at the increasing humanitarian impact of such attacks on civilian populations worldwide, in particular through the perpetration of terrorist acts, and noting the need for a comprehensive approach in addressing this concern,

Expressing concern at the serious harm that such improvised explosive device attacks have caused to United Nations staff and peacekeepers, and to humanitarian workers, by threatening their lives, increasing the cost of their activities, limiting their freedom of movement and affecting their ability to effectively deliver on their mandates,

[1] See resolution 69/51, A/CONF.192/BMS/2014/2, A/71/187 and Security Council resolution 2370 (2017).

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Expressing concern also about the negative impact of these attacks on socioeconomic development, infrastructure and freedom of movement, and on the security and stability of States, and thus underlining the need to address this issue in order to achieve relevant goals and targets under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,[2] in particular target 16.1 on significantly reducing all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere,

Urging Member States to ensure that any measures taken or means employed to implement the present resolution comply with international law, in particular the Charter of the United Nations, applicable international humanitarian law and human rights law,

Recognizing the importance of full involvement and equal opportunities for participation for both women and men in countering the threat posed by improvised explosive devices,

Underlining the importance of addressing the threat of improvised explosive devices and their differential impacts on women, girls, boys and men,

Recognizing that the wide spectrum of materials that can be used for the manufacture of improvised explosive devices, including those sourced from the military and civilian industry, contributes to their diverse nature and their deployment methods, which thus requires an appropriate approach to the formulation of measures to counter them,

Noting that the impact of improvised explosive devices spans a wide array of policy areas and that, owing to the extent of the cross-cutting nature of the issue, a whole-of-government approach focusing on the capacity of Governments to effectively bring together several policy strands for comprehensive action is essential,

Noting also the Secretary-General's disarmament agenda, *Securing our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament*, and its call for United Nations entities to promote a strengthened and coherent United Nations inter-agency coordination on improvised explosive devices,

Underlining the important role that States can play in raising awareness among private sector and other entities about the possible theft, diversion and misuse of their products to make improvised explosive devices, with a view to enabling those entities to develop effective strategies to counter the threat of improvised explosive devices,[3] including to prevent the adverse impact of the diversion of materials and the potential loss of revenue and risk to reputation, either in a partnership with governmental authorities, or through business-to-business processes or activities,

Noting existing industry-led initiatives that seek to increase industry oversight and accountability along the supply chain for precursor components, and encouraging States to engage, as appropriate, with private sector industry actors in supporting such initiatives,

Noting also the contribution of good governance, the promotion of human rights, the rule of law, adherence to the principles of the Charter and sustained and inclusive socioeconomic growth, including through effective measures and mechanisms for persons belonging to vulnerable groups, as important elements in comprehensively addressing the issue of improvised explosive devices, in particular in post-conflict situations,

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[2] Resolution 70/1.

[3] See the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights: Implementing the United Nations "Protect, Respect and Remedy" Framework (A/HRC/17/31, annex).

Stressing the paramount need to prevent illegal armed groups, terrorists and other unauthorized recipients from, and identify the networks that support them in, obtaining, handling, financing, storing, using or seeking access to all types of explosives, whether military or civilian, as well as other military or civilian materials and components that can be used to manufacture improvised explosive devices, including detonators, detonating cords and chemical components, while at the same time avoiding any undue restrictions on the legitimate use of those materials,

Recalling, in this context, relevant resolutions on the prevention of the acquisition of weapons by terrorists, including improvised explosive device components, and their transfer to and between terrorists, associated groups and other illegal armed groups and criminals,[4]

Recalling also relevant resolutions on improvised explosive device threat mitigation, including those addressing the indiscriminate use of improvised explosive devices and the impact on peacekeeping operations, special political missions and humanitarian responses,[5]

Stressing the importance of effectively securing conventional ammunition stockpiles in order to mitigate the risk of their diversion to illicit use as materials for improvised explosive devices, and noting the voluntary, practical International Ammunition Technical Guidelines in this regard,

Stressing also the importance of engagement by all Member States in a comprehensive and coordinated community of action to counter the global threat posed by improvised explosive devices in the hands of illegal armed groups, terrorists and other unauthorized recipients, taking into account national capacities,

Noting that, at the global level, organizations across many sectors have expertise that can contribute to a useful set of measures for the mitigation of improvised explosive devices, and noting also the value of considered and coordinated efforts by various stakeholders, including intergovernmental and regional organizations and industry associations, with a view to investing effectively in coordination and information exchange,

Noting also the discussions on the issue of improvised explosive devices by the informal group of experts under the Protocol on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby Traps and Other Devices as amended on 3 May 1996 (Amended Protocol II)[6] and on the technical annex to the Protocol on Explosive Remnants of War (Protocol V)[7] to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects,[8] and further noting that, for States parties thereto, anti-personnel mines of an improvised nature also fall within the scope of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction,[9]

Noting further the multilateral efforts to counter improvised explosive devices of the Programme Global Shield, led by the World Customs Organization and assisted by the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, to prevent the smuggling and illicit diversion of precursor chemicals that could be used to build improvised explosive devices, the network of regional and multilateral communities of action established by States to

[4] See Security Council resolution 2370 (2017).
[5] See Security Council resolution 2365 (2017).
[6] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2048, No. 22495.
[7] Ibid., vol. 2399, No. 22495.
[8] Ibid., vol. 1342, No. 22495.
[9] Ibid., vol. 2056, No. 35597.

counter improvised explosive devices, the research on those devices undertaken by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research and the work undertaken by the Mine Action Service of the United Nations to mitigate the threat posed by those devices to civilians, United Nations staff, peacekeepers and humanitarian personnel, in particular in the field,

Taking note of the International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings[10] and the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy[11] and the efforts undertaken to strengthen the capability of the United Nations system to assist Member States in implementing the Strategy, including through the establishment of the Office of Counter-Terrorism,[12]

Reaffirming the inherent right of Member States to individual or collective self-defence in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter,

1. *Takes note of* the report of the Secretary-General submitted pursuant to resolution 72/36,[13] including the recommendations contained therein;

2. *Recognizes* that existing approaches in multilateral arms regulation, while valuable, do not fully address the use of improvised explosive devices in conflict and immediate post-conflict environments, and therefore strongly urges States to develop and implement, where appropriate, all national measures, including outreach and partnerships with relevant actors, including the private sector, necessary to promote awareness, vigilance and good practices among their nationals, persons subject to their jurisdiction and firms incorporated in their territory or subject to their jurisdiction that are involved in the production, sale, supply, purchase, transfer and/or storage of precursor components and materials that could be used to make improvised explosive devices;

3. *Strongly encourages* States, where appropriate, to develop and adopt their own national policy to counter improvised explosive devices that includes civilian-military cooperation, to strengthen their countermeasure capability, to prevent their territory from being used for terrorist purposes and to combat illegal armed groups, terrorists and other unauthorized recipients in their use of improvised explosive devices, while bearing in mind their obligations under applicable international law, and notes that the policy could include measures to support international and regional efforts to prevent, protect against, respond to, recover from and mitigate attacks using improvised explosive devices and their widespread consequences;

4. *Urges* all States, in particular those that have the capacity to do so, as well as the United Nations system and other relevant organizations and institutions supporting affected States, to increase attention to prevention and to provide support to reduce the risks posed by improvised explosive devices in a manner which takes into consideration the different needs of women, girls, boys and men;

5. *Stresses* the need for States to take appropriate measures to strengthen the management of their national ammunition stockpiles to prevent the diversion of materials for making improvised explosive devices to illicit markets, illegal armed groups, terrorists and other unauthorized recipients, and encourages the application of the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines for the safer and more secure management of ammunition stockpiles, while also recognizing the importance of

[10] Ibid., vol. 2149, No. 37517.
[11] Resolution 60/288.
[12] See resolution 71/291.
[13] A/73/156.

capacity-building, through both technical and financial assistance, in this regard, as well as the contributions made by various United Nations entities to that end;[14]

6. *Underlines* that, for the issue of improvised explosive devices to be effectively addressed, it is essential to comprehend the importance of action needed at the local and community levels, engaging with community leaders and relevant civil society organizations through activities ranging from awareness-raising of the threat posed by such devices and of possible threat mitigation measures, in conjunction with distributors and local retailers, and intelligence-gathering, to establishing deradicalization programmes, and the need for Governments to engage continuously with local authorities and groups, and encourages States in a position to do so to support initiatives and efforts to that end;

7. *Encourages* States to enhance, as appropriate, international and regional cooperation, including the sharing of information on good practices as appropriate and where relevant, in cooperation with the private sector, the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the World Customs Organization, in order to address the theft, diversion, loss and illicit use of materials for making improvised explosive devices, while ensuring the security of sensitive information that is shared;

8. *Encourages* States and the private sector to increase prevention efforts by taking measures to stem the transfer of knowledge of improvised explosive devices and their construction and use by illegal armed groups, terrorists and other unauthorized recipients, as well as measures to stem the illicit acquisition of components over the Internet;

9. *Encourages* States to increase prevention efforts by taking measures, including awareness-raising, support for research and data collection, to combat illicit procurement of components, explosives and materials for the construction of improvised explosive devices, including through the use of the "dark web";[15]

10. *Encourages* States to participate, in accordance with their obligations and commitments, in the ongoing work on improvised explosive devices by the informal group of experts under the Protocol on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby Traps and Other Devices as amended on 3 May 1996 (Amended Protocol II)[15] to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects,[15] while recognizing the role of the United Nations and other international organizations in providing technical support and insight for these discussions;

11. *Also encourages* States to participate, as appropriate, in a comprehensive and coordinated community of action to counter improvised explosive devices in accordance with their respective international obligations and commitments, and to consider supporting the Programme Global Shield of the World Customs Organization and other multilateral and regional efforts;

12. *Encourages States*, the United Nations and international, regional and other organizations with relevant expertise that are in a position to do so to render to interested States, upon their request, technical, financial and material assistance aimed at strengthening the capacity of such States to counter the threat of improvised explosive devices, including through assistance for the development of good practices

[14] The General Assembly, in its resolution 66/42, welcomed the completion of the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines and the establishment of the "SaferGuard" knowledge resource management programme for the stockpile management of conventional ammunition.

[15] Content of the dark web exists on overlay networks which use the Internet but require specific software, configurations or authorizations that are not indexed by search engines.

for the protection of civilians from attacks using such devices and for the development of standards to ensure the safety of personnel involved in the disposal of improvised explosive devices, and to provide appropriate assistance to the victims of such attacks;

13. *Encourages* States to respond to the needs of today's peacekeepers to operate in new threat environments involving improvised explosive devices, including by providing, in consultation and cooperation with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations of the Secretariat, the appropriate training, capabilities, information and knowledge management and technology required to counter improvised explosive devices, and to ensure that adequate financial resources are allocated to meet such needs, takes note of the Guidelines on Improvised Explosive Device Threat Mitigation in Mission Settings developed by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support of the Secretariat,[16] and encourages the full implementation of the Guidelines in all peacekeeping operations;

14. *Recognizes* that improvised explosive devices are being increasingly used in terrorist activities, takes note of the work of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and the Office of Counter-Terrorism related to the prevention of the acquisition of weapons by terrorists, and encourages all relevant entities of the United Nations system to continue to address the issue of improvised explosive devices, as appropriate and in line with their respective mandates, and to coordinate their activities to that end;

15. *Urges* Member States to comply fully with all relevant United Nations resolutions, including those related to preventing terrorist groups from using and accessing materials that can be used in the making of improvised explosive devices;[17]

16. *Encourages* States and relevant international and regional organizations and non-governmental organizations, including international industry associations, to continue to build upon existing awareness, prevention and risk education campaigns regarding the urgent threat of improvised explosive devices and to disseminate threat mitigation measures;

17. *Encourages* States and relevant international and regional organizations to engage, as appropriate, with private sector entities in discussions and initiatives on countering improvised explosive devices, including on issues such as accountability throughout the supply chain for dual-use components, traceability procedures, improving the regulation of explosive precursors, where possible and as appropriate, strengthening security for the transport and storage of explosives and of precursors, as well as enhancing the vetting procedures for personnel with access to explosives or to precursors useful to the manufacture of explosives, while avoiding undue restrictions on the legitimate use of and access to such materials;

18. *Notes* the relevant research undertaken by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, encourages it to continue research in the area of prevention strategies, and encourages States in a position to do so to continue to support its work in this area;

19. *Strongly encourages* States to share information, on a voluntary basis, on the diversion of commercial-grade explosives and commercially available detonators to the illicit trade and transfers to illegal armed groups, terrorists and other unauthorized recipients, through relevant channels, including the INTERPOL Project Watchmaker, Chemical Anti-Smuggling Enforcement and Chemical Risk

[16] Available at www.un.org/disarmament/convarms/ieds.

[17] Including Security Council resolutions 1373 (2001), 2160 (2014), 2161 (2014), 2199 (2015), 2253 (2015), 2255 (2015) and 2370 (2017).

Identification and Mitigation programmes and the Programme Global Shield of the World Customs Organization;

20. *Encourages* States to share information related to countering the threat posed by improvised explosive devices;

21. *Takes into account* the existing initiatives at the international, regional and national levels to counter improvised explosive devices, and encourages the engagement by States in an open and inclusive dialogue on steps forward to harmonize diverse ongoing efforts, including those on raising awareness and preventive strategies;

22. *Urges* States in a position to do so to contribute funding to the diverse areas of work needed to effectively address the issue of improvised explosive devices, including research, clearance, ammunition stockpile management, preventing violent extremism as and when conducive to terrorism, awareness-raising, capacity-building, information management and victim assistance, through existing trust funds and arrangements, including those of the Office of Counter-Terrorism, the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research and the Office for Disarmament Affairs and the United Nations voluntary trust fund for assistance in mine action, efforts undertaken under relevant conventions[18] or through regional or national programmes;

23. *Welcomes* the establishment by the Office for Disarmament Affairs, in coordination with other relevant entities, of an online information hub that provides impartial, authoritative information relevant to addressing the issue of improvised explosive devices in a comprehensive manner, and encourages States to utilize the hub to access existing initiatives, policies, documents and tools relevant to countering the threat posed by improvised explosive devices;

24. *Takes note* of the completion of the United Nations Improvised Explosive Device Disposal Standards, coordinated by the Mine Action Service of the United Nations in cooperation with national technical experts, applicable where the context or mandate is not humanitarian;

25. *Also takes note* of the ongoing update of the International Mine Action Standards with regard to improvised explosive devices, which serve as the guiding framework for humanitarian mine action operations, and urges the International Mine Action Standards Review Board to rapidly finalize the update;

26. *Notes* that the United Nations Policy on Survivor Assistance in Mine Action highlights the significance of integrating survivor assistance efforts into broader international and national frameworks, as well as the importance of sustained services and support to survivors, including the survivors of attacks involving improvised explosive devices;

27. *Also notes* the completion of the United Nations Peacekeeping Missions Military Explosive Ordnance Disposal Unit Manual and the Improvised Explosive Device Threat Mitigation Military and Police Handbook by the Office of Military Affairs of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Mine Action Service, respectively, to support the capacity of United Nations peacekeepers to effectively address the risks posed by such devices;

28. *Encourages* States in a position to do so to support the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, in consultation with relevant bodies of the United Nations system, in developing a voluntary self-assessment tool to assist States in

[18] Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects and Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction.

identifying gaps and challenges in their national regulation and preparedness regarding improvised explosive devices;

29. *Recognizes* the important contribution of civil society to addressing the issue of improvised explosive devices, including in clearance, awareness-raising, risk education, victim assistance and preventing violent extremism as and when conducive to terrorism, in particular at the local and community levels;

30. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its seventy-fifth session on the implementation of the present resolution, focusing on awareness and prevention strategies, acknowledging and taking into account existing efforts, both inside and outside the United Nations, and seeking the views of Member States;

31. *Encourages* States to continue to hold open, informal consultations, where appropriate, focusing on raising awareness, prevention and coordination within the United Nations system and beyond, with information provided by States, international and regional organizations as well as experts from non-governmental organizations, including relevant private sector stakeholders, on efforts to prevent, counter and mitigate the threat posed by improvised explosive devices, which could assist the Assembly in maintaining a comprehensive overview of relevant global activities;

32. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its seventy-fifth session, under the item entitled "General and complete disarmament", the sub-item entitled "Countering the threat posed by improvised explosive devices".